

on page 138, Taylor neglects to use BC for dates that have been adjusted to the calendar. These minor errors in an otherwise fine book merely illustrate that Murphy's Law should be added to the list of uncertainties that plague date lists.

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**PRELIMINARY STATEMENT ON AN ERROR
IN BRITISH MUSEUM RADIOCARBON DATES
(BM-1700 to BM-2315)***

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A systematic error has been identified in radiocarbon measurements run in the British Museum laboratory between approximately mid 1980 and the end of 1984, when all dating was halted for a number of months. The measurements potentially affected have numbers between about BM-1700 and BM-2315, and correspond roughly to date lists XV to XIX published in *Radiocarbon*. The error is systematic, giving dates that are too young by varying amounts: some may have been underestimated by 200–300 years, whilst others may be little affected. BM dates issued during this period should be used with caution. Dates obtained since mid 1985 are not subject to this error as evidenced by repeated radiocarbon measurements of dendrochronologically-dated wood (see for example BM-2432, date list XX, forthcoming).

A comprehensive set of experiments to clarify and quantify the discrepancy is continuing. When sufficient data are available a full account of the problem will be published. Submitters of a series of samples during the period in question will also be notified individually.

* Reprinted from *Antiquity*, 1987, v 61, p 168.